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Der Raum des Unbehagens / The space of discomfort

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MANIFEST

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The thoughts and decisions made by The American Supreme Court in June 2022
Discussing the topic and necessity of the installation of ***IN NOMINE PATRIS.***



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The ***IN NOMINE PATRIS*** altar will only have 5 replicated copies ever made. Why? Artistic contribution, which is more importantly impacting the social discourse now more than ever. This will also allow the altar to be simultaneously shown on all continents and several countries around the world.

The work was triggered by the never-ending international cases of violence and sexualized violence, e.g., in Canada, Germany, or Ireland, which were committed by church representatives and have become public in recent years. In terms of content, the work spans an arc to a church or interpretation of Christian faith whose mission is the protection of unborn life and which at the same time commits millions of acts against living life.

In June of 2022, while the project ***IN NOMINE PATRIS*** was still in the process of production, three far-reaching decisions of the American Supreme Court made it particularly alarming. I am talking about the decisions on Abortion Rights, the Second Amendment and Climate Change. The same Supreme Court judges who have turned a "right to life" into a "duty to live" are simultaneously doing everything they can to make it more likely for people living in the US to die in a school massacre, a drive-by shooting, a rampage or (particularly for people of color) by police brutality.

Not only are they thinking of making perfidious legislation but especially create a memory-based law culture: In the instance where a woman would be constantly reminded of the associated suffering with every sight of her child, forced by law to give birth and stripped from her freedoms by preventable complicities.

One can surmise that the law follows the same inhuman logic used by the so-called *Mother Theresa* - who ran Catholic mission stations in Calcutta where conditions were so terrible that they were compared to images of the *Bergen-Belsen concentration camp* - and who said, "*there is something beautiful about seeing the poor accept their fate and suffer it like the passion of Christ. The world gains much from their suffering.*" If only she had accepted the same suffering that she deliberately imposed on her victims by omission instead of flying to the USA for cancer treatment, one might have been tempted to believe that she was acting out of humanity.

In early July, I read an article about a recent event in which a judge in a Brazilian court gleefully asked a raped ten- or twelve-year-old girl what name she wanted to christen her child, while ordering that, in an emergency, the girl to be taken into state custody and removed from the influence of her parents to prevent an abortion.

Leaping back to the USA: If American citizens come through "reasonably unscathed", they would still have the second far-reaching ruling of the Supreme Court's regarding the CO2 emissions law for energy suppliers. Increasing their chances of living in a hostile environment and putting it in the nomenclature of Christianity, one must also consider and comment on the law as "Destroying Creation". Thankfully, this judgement would also benefit all of beings not living in the US.

The question arises when acts and convictions are done, all in the name of God - how did they get the grotesque idea of believing in a god, let alone acting on his behalf? For if all this were their God's will, he would make the devil seem like a miserable, good-for-nothing creature in comparison to him. "Subdue the earth" – and with it, its inhabitants, preferably women, children and representatives of other skin colors or cultures. Hallelujah and Amen!

Incidentally, at this year's celebration of American Independence Day on July 4th, a shooter near Chicago just unduly celebrated from a rooftop the further liberalization of gun laws. He killed several people in the process. Congratulations America, thank you, Supreme Court! And no, it is not my words that are cynical, but solely the fact that I must find and utter them to describe the incomprehensible.

I had to become an old white man to realize how much the way of thinking, the moral concepts, or norms of other "old white men" have also contaminated my thinking or actions and, for example, have an influence on my image of women, my dealings with people of other cultures or on my own sexuality. It is a process, a constant struggle, to recognize this poison and these double standards and to transform them. Fortunately, I was not entirely unprepared. An old black man, US-American, whom I regularly met in *Café Größenwahn* in *Lothringerstraße* during my time in *Munich* in the 90s, shared a piece of wisdom with me: "*Remember: about the first 20 years - through family, kindergarten, church, school, university - you get socialized through and for society. From then on till the end of your life you try to get rid of most of the shit to become free.*"

The German-Swiss psychologist, psychoanalyst and author *Arno Gruen* described this statement based on life experience with the words of the writer *Edward Young*: "*We are born as originals but die as copies.*" By this he means the phenomenon, which can be observed not least in our Western cultures, that the ability of human beings to communicate and empathize, which is already present in infants, is at some point replaced by the principle of power. In my opinion, with fatal consequences for us as individuals and for the societies in which we live.

This text and the installation **IN NOMINE PATRIS** are not directed against people who draw their empathy, charity, helpfulness, or humanity from their faith! They are meant to give an impulse to recognize, name, fight and ostracize those who have become enemies of humanity in the name of a god - no matter what religion they belong to. As societies, we must finally deny them any claim to integrity or morality, make their poison visible, banish them from all social decision-making bodies and bring the perpetrators among them before ordinary courts without the right to a reprieve and finally hold them accountable with all the means of the constitutional state. Why?

We owe it to the millions of victims of abuse of power, violence, and sexualized violence. The reality is, that in the end, we owe it to ourselves.